

## News Release

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Alcohol continues to be the substance most frequently abused by teens and college students**

Salt Lake City – Two recent surveys, completed by Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and various community partners, reveal that the substance most frequently abused by teens and college students continues to be alcohol.

### **Utah Higher Education Health Behavior Survey:**

Completed by a total of 11,828 students attending ten colleges throughout the state. The survey had several objectives, including assessing the prevalence of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use on Utah campuses, measuring the need for substance abuse treatment by college students and measuring the levels of selected risk factors for substance abuse. The survey revealed the following:

- 72% of students under age 21 report it is very easy or sort of easy to get alcohol
- 30% gave someone else money to buy alcohol
- 49% of students report it is very easy or sort of easy to get marijuana
- 23% agree that drugs and alcohol are a normal part of life – 28% are neutral
- 10% need alcohol or drug treatment

In regards to beliefs about peer attitudes and behavior, the survey findings indicate college students have an inflated view of their peers' substance use:

- 40% of students believe that over 21% of their student peers used marijuana in the past year – only 9% actually used
- 55% of students believe that over 41% of their student peers drank alcohol in the past year – only 30% actually drank

Overall, for most substances, Utah students use at rates that are one-half to one-quarter the national rates. For a detailed report, go to: [http://www.dsamh.utah.gov/higher\\_ed.htm](http://www.dsamh.utah.gov/higher_ed.htm)

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**Student Health And Risk Prevention (SHARP) Survey:**

Completed by a total of 62,536 students, grades 6-12, attending 38 of the 40 school districts statewide. A Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA), designed to measure substance use rates, risky behaviors and risk and protective factor levels, was completed by the student sample. The survey revealed the following:

- Highest lifetime use rates:
  - Alcohol – 28%
  - Cigarettes – 16%
  - Marijuana – 12%
  - Inhalants – 11%
- Highest 30-day use rates:
  - Alcohol – 12%
  - Cigarettes – 4%
  - Marijuana – 5%
  - Inhalants – 3%

Compared to other states, Utah continues to have low use rates, low risk and high protection. For a detailed report, go to: <http://www.dsamh.utah.gov/sharp.htm>

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